

Letter 422
Nuenen, late August 1885

Dear Theo,

I received your letter and enclosed 20 francs in good order. Many thanks. Now I can tell you that I sent off to Leurs the box containing 7 paintings of different subjects, and to make it more complete, I added 12 smaller painted studies. I also wrote Wisselingh that I had sent those pictures, and asked him to go and see them. Yet I am still sorry that these pictures did not go to you.

If we had paid off Leurs and you had taken these pictures and if you had got too many of one kind, we might have picked out some from the various lots to show in Holland; then the things that remained with you would have been of the very best, a core to be gradually enlarged as we progressed. But, as you say, it is no use crying over spilt milk.

By way of provisional answer to what you wrote with regard to drawings of figures in their surroundings, I sent you a few today. But I doubt whether they are suitable for framing, and if, being in the fields, I am fortunate enough to find something better, I shall try and add a few others shortly.

In answer to what you write about being convinced as to not having gone too far yet in economizing, your ledger can prove this in case the expenses are greater than the profits. Perhaps so. But the reason? Yes, the people at home, but, boy, you can't keep it up as you do now. I suffer through it, I assure you, but if need be, I will consent to being even poorer than I was in previous years. But does it make those at home happier, and are they any better off? – and...later on, the consequences for them and for you – will you feel happy about them?

Really, when I think of my own experience, when I think how my working for some years at Goupil & Co.'s ended in my being drawn very strongly toward home, when I think how there followed for me an absolutely bewildering crisis which soon left me entirely alone, and how everything and everybody I had formerly relied upon changed completely and left me high and dry. When I think of those melancholy times, I am so afraid that the present will prove to be no firm ground under your feet. And then I feel obliged to state – not by way of reproach – not in order to frighten you – not on purpose to make you lose courage, but meaning it as a harsh truth – that in my opinion the sun may set on you; aye, is setting on you. But the fact that I add, “Renew yourself, but seek the renewal in the core of the profession of painting and of dealing too, but having your own business,” is in itself proof enough that I do not mean this in a reproachful or offensive way. I speak as somebody who has known strife and is still in the midst of the fight. Well with every new year time seems to go more quickly, more things seem to happen, things go in a greater rush.

I say this without beating about the bush in order to show you that, in case things were to change for you, I should think it the most natural and comprehensible thing in the world, and far from wanting to reproach you with anything, I should propose that we undertake more things together, and not let anything crush us, either of us. On the contrary, we should both show that our hearts are full of vim and energy – and love of art of a sterling quality.

I often have to fight against rather serious troubles, instead of being prosperous, quite the opposite.

Well – but the more unfavourable outward circumstances become, the more the inner resources, that is the love for the work, increase. And if no new resources, yet new – renewed – chances will offer themselves.

As I told you, I added to this little package of drawings a few new ones, but I shall try to make several more this month, the size of that woman shelling peas, which was the last one I did.

Goodbye.

Ever yours, Vincent